



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
AGENCY
REGION 6
1201 ELM STREET, SUITE 500
DALLAS, TEXAS 75270**

Office of the Regional Administrator

The Honorable Henry Cuellar
House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

Dear Congressman Cuellar,

Thank you for your October 18 letter regarding ethylene oxide emissions from Midwest Sterilization Corporation (MSC), a commercial sterilizer plant in Laredo, Texas. I appreciate you highlighting this concern for us.

Your letter requested that EPA hold a community meeting to address Laredo community concerns regarding ethylene oxide (EtO) emissions. I am glad to inform you that we are already holding discussions with the Rio Grande International Study Center (RGISC) leadership to plan a community meeting.

Prior to our receiving your letter, we had also received a letter from the RGISC asking that EPA take similar actions as you requested in your letter to address community concerns in Laredo. Matt Tejada, Director of EPA's Office of Environmental Justice in Washington, D.C., and our Region 6 Acting Director of the Office of Communities Tribes and Environmental Assessment, Olivia Balandran, met with Tricia Cortez, RGISC Executive Director, and Melissa Cigarroa, RGISC President, to further discuss their letter stating similar concerns as yours. Both EPA and RGISC agreed to have a follow up meeting to discuss an appropriate timeframe to schedule a community meeting in Laredo.

I would like to offer the opportunity as well for your office to be engaged with the scheduling of, and participation at, the Laredo community meeting. I have asked Olivia Balandran of my staff to coordinate the next planning meetings for us. She will be including your office in any planning discussions of a community meeting in Laredo.

In reference to your concern that EPA did not include the MSC in its recent announcement that it is considering requiring 31 facilities to report EtO releases to the TRI, this facility was not included because we only included those that do not currently report to TRI. The MSC Laredo facility is already reporting to TRI; therefore, it was not included on this list.

While additional research is underway at EPA to improve our ability to properly monitor for EtO in air, EPA is conducting air dispersion and human health inhalation risk modeling as part of ongoing the national air toxics rulemaking: Ethylene Oxide Emissions Standards for Sterilization Facilities: National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP). The community around the MSC Laredo facility is included in this assessment being conducted as part of this national rulemaking.

EPA is currently collecting and analyzing commercial sterilizer emissions and emission control data to craft a stronger national rule for these facilities. A proposed rule revision to better address public risks

from commercial sterilizer ethylene oxide emissions is expected to be published for public comment in late Spring 2022.

As I mentioned earlier, we look forward to working with you and RGISC in planning a community meeting with Laredo constituents. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact Olivia Balandran, Acting Director, Office of Communities, Tribes and Environmental Assessment, at (214) 665-7257 or [[HYPERLINK "mailto:balandran.olivia-r@epa.gov%20"](mailto:balandran.olivia-r@epa.gov%20)]

Sincerely,

David W. Gray
Acting Regional Administrator